

Astrological Aspects - The Septile Series and Destiny, or Fate

by Robert Wilkinson

As I've mentioned in this article about **the Basics of Astrology**, there are really only four factors involved in the craft. There are planets, signs, houses, and aspects. The planets are our "lights" symbolizing the different parts of our personality makeup, and **each planet has a duality of function**. The planets all occupy a sign. The 12 signs are the filters through which the lights shine, whether in healthy or dysfunctional ways. Thus a Sun in Aries is illuminated by Aries experiences and people, whereas a Sun in Virgo is illuminated through Virgo experiences and people. Venus is what we like, both in art, people, and life. Venus in Taurus likes Taurus types of art and people, whereas a Venus in Sagittarius likes Sag types of art and people. Saturn is what we fear, and our bottom line regarding boundaries and responsibility. Saturn in Virgo finds its limit through Virgo experiences, Saturn in Aquarius finds its limit through Aquarian experiences.

The houses represent the various areas of life. The first house, or Ascendant, indicates our self image, the second house is our values and wealth, our seventh house our partnerships, the eleventh house our friends and ambitions, and so on. Each house has a sign quality, sometimes two. This is determined by the time of birth, and shows our bias in that department of life. Then there are the aspects, the angular relationships between the planets and various points in the chart. These show us the relationship between the departments of our inner self as well as our outer life, and indicate when the timing on critical choices will occur. Through the aspects we can find out when we will be challenged, when things will proceed harmoniously, when things will specialize or hit a fork in the road or finally come to fruition.

Each aspect series results from division of the circle by the numbers 1 through 12. 1 results in the conjunction, 2 in the opposition, 3 the trine, 4 the square, 5 the quintile, 6 the sextile, 7 the septile, 8 the semisquare, 9 the novile, 10 the decile (or semi-quintile), 11 the elftile, and 12 the semi-sextile. There are harmonics of these, of course. For example, in the specializing series represented by the Decile and Quintile, there is also the Tredecile (108 degrees) and the Biquintile (144 degrees). All four of the aspects in this series show unique specializations, whether partly developed uniquenesses (decile), fully developed uniquenesses (quintile), interactive complementary uniquenesses (tredecile), or interactive fully developed uniquenesses (biquintile).

I know that some books credit the quintiles with qualities other than what I've just offered. Though there is general acceptance of the better known angles (dating from Ptolemy), there is some confusion about the more obscure aspects, such as the quintile, septile, and novile series aspects. I've just given you what I believe are some qualities of the quintiles, since 5 represents specialization, expansion, and "quintessence."

I originally outlined the basics of the septile and novile series aspects in my 1978 book "Astrology and the Spiritual Path," out of print for many years. (There is another by that name, but it was published years later by another author.) Today I will offer you some insights about the septile series aspects, so that you can apply some of your observations about these "forks in the road of destiny." Hopefully, this can help you understand why things can be so weird at times, why there seems to be no reason for some things to happen, and why often all of our thinking and reasoning and explaining still doesn't help us choose when confronted by critical decisions.

In the septile series there are the septile (51+ degrees), biseptile (102+ degrees), and triseptile (154+ degrees). Due to the non-rationality of the numbers produced when the circle is divided by 7, it is assumed that these aspects represent the non-rational points in the cycle. Thus on a personality level they show as obsessive or compulsive behavior, irrationality or strange inexplicable points in the process. And of course, as you know if you've been reading this column for any length of time, when operating as a transit they represent critical "forks in the road of destiny," where we must choose which way we will define our personality and therefore our future.

7 is Saturn's number, so that's why it is assumed these points deal with "destiny." Since "character is destiny," as you make your character by your choices you forge your destiny out of the mass of potentials you could choose into the concrete choices that reveal your ability to respond to your karma. This is the true "response-ability" that we accept as a result of Saturn's lessons. Any planet septiling, biseptiling, or triseptiling any other planet has hit a fork in the road of that process, a point where reason and rationality may not serve your ability to choose.

The septile, falling 51 degrees 25 minutes from any given point, shows the first or last fork in the road relative to the conjunction. The waxing septile comes after the first internal crisis of growth at the waxing semisquare and precedes the productive period shown by the waxing sextile. The waning septile comes after the final productivity of the waning sextile phase of the process and the choice at the waning septile precipitates the internal crisis at the waning semisquare. It is a point of emergent choice showing which way the process will develop, or final choice before the disintegration of the old form, forming the seed that will grow anew at the rebeginning of the next conjunction.

The biseptile, falling 102 degrees 50 minutes from any point, is said to be a point of "exteriorization of destiny." While sounding very dramatic, in fact it is simply the next fork in the road of the process that starts at any conjunction, or the next point where the irrational elements of being will show up. It is the natural decision point after the crisis of the waxing square before the productive period of the waxing trine, and usually involves some deep stuff, since it falls in the fourth house relative to any point. The waning biseptile has the same irrational "exteriorization of destiny" qualities, but since it falls in the ninth house relative to any point, it is the culminating fork in the road to seeing the truth of a thing, and it precedes the culmination point of the waxing square.

The triseptile comes in at 154 degrees 16 minutes, and indicates more of a non-rational, cooperative-collective point in the process, since it always falls in the sixth or seventh house relative to a point. It is like the other points in quality, except that it usually involves other people who are also at a critical fork in their own cooperative road. These are points of adjustment, refinement, shifts in how and who you related to, and show you how others are or are not a part of your larger "destiny."

A final important note: if you have two or more planets in a septile, biseptile, or triseptile to each other, they will naturally create resonant "void points" where other septile series aspects fall. These are trigger points for irrational conditions or personality "destiny" elements to come forth in the life. Though these periods can seem very weird indeed, they are points of choice, decision, and movement where reason may fail even though major things are in motion.

For example, you know that because of the Neptune septile Pluto we're in the midst of **The Grand Irrationality**. Over the past few months it has stimulated points at 7-11 Virgo, 29 Libra-3 Scorpio, 19-23 Sagittarius, 12-16 Aquarius, 3-7 Aries, 25-29 Taurus, and 15-19

Cancer. If any of these points are strong in your chart, you have all the other points also active. These have been progressing forward about 1 to 3 degrees a year due to the movement of Neptune and Pluto.

Since I have a planet in mid-Aquarius, it shows that planet will be influenced by any transitting planet occupying these points. Thus Pluto is in a long term waning septile to my planet, and Jupiter will be waning biseptile my planet in late October and early November when it occupies the Scorpio points, and so forth. The septile qualities will be more in evidence every time the transitting Moon occupies any of these points, and will obviously affect the areas of my chart where the planets occupy and what sectors they rule.

It works that way for all of us. The link to the Grand Irrationality can help you find out if your generation is one being influenced by this long term pressure. And if you know how to calculate aspects, take a look at your chart to see where your different planetary irrationality zones are, as it may help you the next time they activate

A COMPILATION ON SEPTILES

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From "Aries Full Moon 2005": A septile is an aspect of $51 \frac{3}{7}$ degrees (what we get when we divide a circle by seven). Only a degree of orb is allowed for it, and the vast majority of astrologers do not use it at all, primarily because it does not really register in the lives of most people. It is of interest to note that it shows prominently in the charts of more than a few famous astrologers, though. There is scant information on it. It is an aspect that has been noted in the charts of creative artists. The primary exponent of it was John Addey, himself blessed with a septile triangle (We will get to that shortly.), the advocate of harmonics in astrology. He said that the septile gave one "the ability to sense the mysterious whole behind the parts of a subject....." I have a good friend—an astrologer's astrologer—who said it best, I think: "Septiles give one the ability to comprehend the hidden side of things." She has found them strongly placed in the charts of psychics. (She is in the process of writing several books, and when those are about to come out I will put in a plug for her.) We should keep in mind that the septile is a series based upon the number 7, which number is most strongly represented at this time by the planet Uranus. So, from an aspect so closely connected with Uranus, we would fully expect to see it strongly placed in the charts of people who work with the hidden side of things. We would also expect it to work somehow with the principle of order, because the number seven is associated with the 7th Ray—the archetypal energy of Ceremonial Ritual and Order. From what we have just discussed, Uranus rules the path of occultism and over all things hidden from view, but waiting to be expressed or revealed. I have done a bit of research on this aspect myself, and I have found some things that may be of interest.

Having looked through chart databases, certain things about the septile stand out to me.

1) They are strongly implicated in the charts of people who have revealed the

hidden side of nature.

2) They are implicated in the charts of people who either work with or impose order.

3) They are often found in the charts of people who stand as examples for the shape of things to come.

4) They are found in the charts of people who work with cycles of destiny, either consciously or unconsciously.

The preceding points are especially true when regular patterns of linked septiles occur in a chart, as we see below with John Addey's chart:

There are some outstanding examples. Of the people who either worked with or revealed the greater cycles that condition us, we have Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler and Alice Bailey. These people had beautiful patterns of linked septiles within their charts. Bailey and Kepler had interlocked patterns of septile triangles—quite beautiful. Kepler also had a quintile triangle linked to the septiles. Brahe and Kepler were two of the great father figures in astronomy. Kepler was actually Brahe's assistant. Theirs is a fascinating story, but the fact to be seen here is that their work involved the cycles of the heavens and the revelation of that which lay beyond the realm of the minds of the time. They understood the whole from the parts, when all was said and done. Bailey's work is well-known to most of readers of this letter. She was an amanuensis and revealed much about occultism as we know it in the West through her writings. Buried in her writings as well are the subjective cycles of the planets—the Ray cycles.

There is a septile pattern that appears in the charts of some famous astrologers, too. That particular one is formed by a linked series of septile-based aspects: a septile, a bi-septile and a tri-septile, all linked and forming a triangle in the chart. That triangle is interesting for other reasons, too. On the whole, though, this is a triangle that reveals order in some way. Of the famous astrologers, we have C. G. Jung, John Addey, Cyril Fagan and Reinhold Ebertin. There were also some famous dictators who had this triangle: Adolph Hitler, Francisco Franco, Fidel Castro and Saddam Hussein. They were/are certainly imposing people, in the negative sense of the word. We also have Washington Irving, David Frost, Emily Dickinson, William Faulkner and William Blake—who all certainly revealed a lot about the power of ordered words to move people. Poets also have a capacity to really sense the undercurrents of things. This septile triangle, along with other septile patterns, also appears quite often in the charts of European royalty. I have not checked it for royalty in other parts of the world. If I had to name this triangle, I would call it 'the Benchmark Triangle'.

As for other septile patterns, the list is a bit longer, but I will put out the names and you can see what you think. Benjamin Britten, Robert Burton, Queen Elizabeth II, L. Ron Hubbard, David Hibbert, Lewis Carroll, Michael Caine, Paul Choisonard,

William R. Hamilton, Randall Garret, John Fremont, Steven Foster (the songwriter, not the author), James Connelly, Jean Harlowe, Amelia Earhart, Alfred Dreyfus, Sir Isaac Newton, Bix Beiderbecke, Harry Belafonte and William Pitt. These patterns can occur in people from all walks of life. There were explorers and adventurers in this lot, royalty and statesmen, musicians and writers. They all worked with order in some way. Many of them expanded our minds. All of them were able to work with the unseen, subtle currents affecting them and the humanity of their day. They all were tapped into the psyche of their times. And, they all contributed something towards a new order in their own fields. They each set a benchmark for others to follow.

But, the particular septile yod that occurs in this full moon figure [see below] is a bit of a strange influence. I'll list some of the famous people who have it and you will see what I mean: Hank Williams, Brenda Vaccaro, Frank Sinatra, William H. Sheldon, James Earl Ray, Richard Nixon, Jack Kerouac, Johannes Kepler, Horace Howe, Michel Gauquelin, Sigmund Freud, John C. Fremont, Francisco Franco, Steven Foster, Eric Clapton, Fidel Castro, Ludwig II of Bavaria, and Albert Victor (Earl of Clarence). Hank Williams died before his time. A few of these people were substance abusers—addictive personalities, in other words (Kerouac, Freud, Clapton, Williams, Victor). There was also a criminal element (Ray, Nixon, Sinatra, Victor) and a bit of insanity, too (Ludwig II, Victor). There was a strong element of the negative side of the 7th ray in some of these—the imposition of order, in other words (Franco, Castro, Nixon). Yods are always thought to be a stressful configuration, no matter what the type of aspect they are based upon. There is always something seeking resolution with a yod, and in this case we see people trying to make some sense of their lives, often in alien environments; people who sense something greater than themselves but who find it very difficult to integrate that into their own psyches; people who are often very sensitive, but who find it difficult to handle that sensitivity (so they seek solace in substances at times rather than inner peace—sometimes they get pushed over the edge) and, people who feel compelled (and yods often bring compulsions) to 'see what is on the other side'. So, this yod in the Easter Festival figure will bring the qualities just mentioned with it.

The higher side of the preceding paragraph is that we will/should feel compelled to bring through the things that beckon to or nag us from 'the worlds beyond the veil'. A few of the people just mentioned, like Gauquelin, Kepler and Freud, left a legacy to the world. They did penetrate some mysteries. They were certainly compulsive—yet ordered—in what they did. They saw the prevailing undercurrents within the fields of their work and they were able to comprehend the patterns and bring them through for the rest of us. It is important to note that what these people brought through is not perfect by any means, but they cracked a code and

made a good start. They found a pattern that others could follow and thus complete the work over generations to come. There is a lot in this yod about movement, too. Some of these people were explorers and adventurers (Kerouac, Fremont, and Howe) and their discoveries led either to new countries or to new paradigms in their fields. Music also opens us to other realities and the world would be more barren were it not for the likes of Clapton, Foster and Sinatra. Those people also set benchmarks in the field of popular music.

We should address a final point on the drugs and insanity this yod seems to bring with it at times. It is said there is often a fine line between genius and insanity. Unfortunately, the insanity portended here does not accompany genius. It is the result of the abuse of the order of the body. Drugs are also said to be one of the ways to enlightenment, though it is a very dangerous road and one that is not recommended by any Teacher I know of. Herein lies a warning about this septile yod: Abuse your God-given body at your own peril. Seek enlightenment or solace through inner work rather than the allure of substance. Substance abuse seems particularly hazardous to people who have this yod in their chart. So does abuse of power. Power is given of God, and to abuse that privilege is to invite retribution under the auspices of this yod. One has only to look at the lives of Ludwig II and Nixon to see how this might work. We will have to see what awaits Castro as a bookmark to the end of his life.

The apex planet of any yod is important, and it defines the keys to releasing the potential of the yod. Saturn is the apex planet in this case. Make no mistake—this is a powerful yod. The septile is between Neptune and Pluto. We talked of that pairing in the previous letter. Those two planets are also in parallel in this chart, making this a ‘power aspect’ in the terms of the Magi Society. Those two planets give all-too-clear a warning about the consequences associated with the abuse of power, privilege and body. At the other end of the spectrum, though, they also speak of the highest possible of insights that can be made available to us if we make the effort and follow spiritual protocol. Pluto clears away that which obscures the vision set forth by Neptune. With Saturn at the apex, we find the necessity of manifesting that vision in the outer world somehow. This yod is a powerful tool for all who can make use of ritual, order and insight to bring through the needed steps to be taken this year. Ritual is very important for any full manifestation of a septile, especially a septile yod. In addition, there is a regular and enmeshed pattern of septile triangles, adding greatly to the psychic sensitivity and spiritual awareness brought forward at this solar festival. Psychic sensitivity is said to be the main ‘problem’ with the sign Pisces as it manifests through people.

One of my friends and a very fine astrologer here calls septiles a ‘doorway to the inner realms’. The septile is an aspect that can confer unusual understandings of issues at hand at its least or open a direct door to the inner worlds at its best.

The planets involved in this configuration are Venus, Neptune and Pluto with Venus and Neptune forming a septile yod with Saturn at the apex.

“Aries Full Moon 2007”: The other main aspect pattern in this figure is not obvious on the surface and, unless one knows about ‘minor’ (the term should be ‘harmonic’) aspects it would not even get a mention. I always look for interlaced and interlocked patterns of such aspects in a figure, for they denote special qualities and areas or modes of special talents that the standard aspects do not describe. The particular pattern to which I refer in this figure is one of three interlaced and interlocked septile-series triangles involving the Sun, Neptune, Pluto and the South Node. Furthermore, just five hours before the full moon, the Moon completed another such triangle, being at the base of a septile yod with the Uranus/Node conjunction at the apex. This yod is an exact reflection of another septile yod in the interlaced pattern with the sun and Neptune as the base and the South Node at the apex. This is a rare configuration, and it is very occult in its action and implication. I wrote at some length about septile patterns in the 2005 Aries letter. [see above]

If we look at the planets involved in the septile patterns we find two of the main planets of occultism involved—Neptune and Pluto. Pluto clears the way for the sublime Light of Neptune. It brings about freedom from the past and the end of illusion. Neptune is Lord over Pluto and governs its orbital movement, so all outer occurrences that have the stamp of Pluto upon them are actually precursors of Neptunian enlightenment to come. This last point was covered in the 2005 Pisces letter. Any time we find both planets involved in a septile pattern then we can be certain that a rare opportunity for insight is to be bestowed if we are open to it. One could say that Pluto is the herald of expanded intuition, which Neptune represents. With the Sun completing the triangle, we find a high degree of impressionability, especially with Neptune as the midpoint of the triangle. The highest expression of this triangle, then, is the natural seer. It can give us a doorway into things of which we have yet to conceive or would not ordinarily perceive. The inner realms can be opened to us if we were to rightly use the dynamic of this full moon figure.

On the downside of this septile pattern, the Moon’s South Node is at one point of another triangle and the Moon itself is disseminating the qualities contained in the yod described previously. What this means is that old psychological patterns, if adhered to, will trip us up if we try to move forward with things, ignoring the inner promptings given us from the higher Self. In other words, if we give ourselves over to escapist tendencies or outmoded forms of expression, then the inner process described by the septile patterns here could possibly lead to falls from grace, health problems, a lack of energy or, in extreme cases, martyrdom. What is being described here is what has been called the ‘Icarus Effect’ by a good friend of mine—we see a grand vision, are full of inspiration, try to ascend toward that which we

desire but fall to earth instead because we have ignored certain fundamentals and weak points within ourselves or those close to us—not done our homework, in other words—and wind up crashing because of our own folly or blindness to our issues. As a warning here, be aware that martyrdom is a distinct possibility this year and is strongly indicated. Watch the news and, if you are in a dangerous area, be mindful and cautious. This full moon will work to the extreme on either pole.

“Leo Full Moon 2005”: Septile patterns always give the capacity to set new benchmarks in one’s chosen line of work because the inner pattern stands revealed to a person. We have discussed these patterns before, but the upshot of this one might best be described as ‘the insight born of daring’, or the ‘intimate understanding of what it means to live a calculated risk’. This is an experience-inducing triangle. Whenever Mars and Jupiter are aspected adversely (septiles are not generally seen as favorable aspects) there is always the chance that people will go overboard and throw caution to the wind, sometimes with ‘less than favorable’ outcomes. That dynamic gives a sort of ‘diamond-in-the-rough’ mentality, and when Chiron is connected with those two the stage is set for a fair amount of emotional turmoil due to inattention to risks and excessive behavior.

But, the triangle just described can be revelatory just the same because it will cause people to break through boundaries, to shake up the comfortable patterns that keep us locked into static modes of thought and to rejuvenate relations that have otherwise been stuck. Things behind the scenes are always revealed through these septile patterns.

“Wesak Moon 2005”: There is one point that does need to be reiterated about septile-based (7th-harmonic) patterns, though. Along with the possibilities for penetrating ‘beyond the veil’ that they represent, septiles also indicate that a new order could be put in place by such a strong 7th-harmonic pattern. Given that we have a Wesak Moon, an eclipse, a special conclave and such a series of septiles, one would expect to see changes to be wrought in the world and especially in the human psyche. Be assured that there will be new paradigms of thought introduced into the minds of people everywhere

Most of the articles on the Western half of this site[1] in the deal with the full moons. These are the periods of the lunar month when the most light, physical and subjective, is shone upon our planet. Hence, in terms of spiritual practices, especially for meditation, they are the times when the greatest insights usually come and when we can more easily penetrate into the subjective realms. However, spirituality is not solely limited to the more lighted periods of the lunar month, and much good work can be done at other periods as well.[2] One of those times of the lunar month that it is particularly important, and of which it is beneficial to be to be cognizant, is the week that includes the new moon—commonly called the ‘dark half of the moon’. The dark half of the moon takes

place when the moon moves between the earth and the sun, the period between the two crescent phases—or the two astrological semisquares between the sun and the moon—and it is thus the interval where there is very little in the way of reflected light from the sun that reaches us from the moon.

The dark half of the moon is actually quite an important period, especially with respect to meditative practices, and we will get to the particulars of why in due course. But before that, a little information about what the new moon physically represents might open a few doors for more insights into the dark phase of the moon. We have the following factors to consider with the new moon:

- The new moon is commonly seen as the first day of the lunar month in cultures that use a lunar calendar.
- The fact that the moon is between the earth and the sun at the dark half of the moon adds a greater gravitational influence toward the sun on the earth than is otherwise the case, and this has subjective and physical effects. We have the opposite effect at the full moons, with a gravitational pull in both directions.
- The extra gravitational pull exerted at the dark half of the moon has a more pronounced effect on the liquid elements in the Earth and in the bodies of all creatures on the planet, including humanity, due to the fact that it adds to the sun's normal gravitational pull.
- These more pronounced effects resulting in the changes in bodily water balance at the times of the dark half of the moon can and often do result in phenomena such as headaches, feelings of sluggishness, aches and pains in the joints and a general feeling of dis-ease in the body.
- The period from the waning crescent to the new moon represents the closing of the month, with the waxing crescent representing the opening of a new phase in the lunar cycle.
- The lunar phases have their correspondences in the seasons of the year. The time of the year when there is the least light on either hemisphere—winter, in other words, either northern or southern—is the period wherein people are the most likely to report feeling depressed, to feel hemmed in or to feel more inward (withdrawn), and this in large part has to do with the amount of light we get as much as it does with the colder weather. The dark half of the moon can thus be seen as a sort of 'winter' of each month, and due care should thus be taken to avoid a sense of depression or despondency. Also, the plant kingdom is very much in a state of hibernation during winter, especially in the colder areas of the world, for example.

With the preceding points in mind, we can begin to get a sense of why it is important to give attention to the new moon in spiritual. There are three main points that stand out:

- 1) There is increased gravitational pull at the new moon, with its attendant physical effects.

- 2) There is decreased light at the time of the new moon, with its attendant psychological effects
- 3) The new moon corresponds with an ebb in the activities associated with the moon, such as plant growth, hair growth, etc.. This applies to many other forms of outer activity.

All these points together serve to indicate why the new moon is not especially favored for clarity in meditation. We might naturally think from these points that the new moon would otherwise favor drawing one's consciousness inward, but such is not the case. With the tendency toward depression, feelings of physical uneasiness, along with the ebb of subjective life, the new moon does not favor subjective work, and it is in fact the time when there are more subjective interferences to inner, subjective work. We have an example of these latter ideas demonstrated for us astrologically. In astrology, aside from transits, the secondary progressions of the moon reflect the preceding points to a great degree, especially in the emotional realm. The dark half of the progressed lunar cycle is typically not the happiest of times for people. People often report feeling blocked as to what they would like to do, they often feel depressed at times throughout that period, or at a loss as to why they feel somewhat at odds with life in general.

We have the following quote to illustrate the preceding regarding depression:[3]
[4]

II. Depression or its polar opposite, hilarity. When we touch on the subject of depression we are dealing with something so widespread that few escape its attacks. It is like a miasma, a fog which environs the [person] and makes it impossible [for one] to see clearly, walk surely, and cognise Reality. It is part of the great astral illusion

and, if this is grasped, it will become apparent why depression exists, for the cause of it is either astral or physical and incident to a world situation or a personal situation. We might therefore study depression in individuals and look at its causes. It is caused by:

1. The world glamour. This sweeps an isolated unit, otherwise free from individual conditions producing depression, into the depths of a world reaction. This world glamour with its devitalising and depressing results has its roots in various factors which we have only the time to briefly indicate:
 - a. Astrological factors, either affecting the planetary chart and hence individuals, or primarily racial. These two factors are oft overlooked.
 - b. The path of the sun in the heavens. The southern path tends to a lowered vibratory influence [this applies solely to the northern hemisphere] and [in either

hemisphere] aspirants should bear this in mind in autumn and the early winter months.

c. The dark half of the moon, the period towards the end of the waning moon, and the early new moon. This, as you well know, affects the meditation work.

d. Psychological factors and mass inhibitions due undoubtedly to forces external to the planet and to plans, obscure in their intent to ordinary humanity. These forces, playing upon the human race, affect the most sensitive; they in their turn affect their environment and gradually a momentum is established which sweeps through a race or a nation, through a period or a cycle of years, and produces conditions of profound depression and of mutual distrust. It causes a sad self-absorption and this we term a panic or a wave of unrest. The fact that the working out may be military, economic, social or political, that it may take the form of a war, of a religious inquisition, of financial stringency or international distrust is incidental. The causes lie back in the blue prints of the evolutionary process and are governed—even if unrealised—by the good Law.

Given the preceding, we may be apt to think of the day of the new moon and the entire period of the dark half of the moon as negative periods, but that would be a mistake. Instead, that time should be seen as part of a natural cycle, representing for us in human terms the ebb of meditative or internal focus, calling for us instead to put the outer world in order, to lay to rest those things that need to go by the wayside, to organize ourselves for renewed effort later in the lunar cycle—in other words, to finish up, consolidate and be ready for new efforts. The new moon in the progressed lunar cycle represents a fresh start, along with the gains made from the previous cycle. The progressed lunar cycle generally represents about twenty-nine years of life, roughly consistent with a cycle of transiting Saturn, and in tracking these two cycles through a person's life a fairly clear picture emerges as to the emotional and karmic cycles and obligations throughout life. In other words, the first twenty-nine years of life will find a reflection in the later such cycles, though with the foundation of past experience upon which to build.

During the progressed dark half of the moon, if one is feeling particularly beset by depression or lassitude, one's time is often best spent in reflecting over the preceding years since the previous progressed dark half, of putting one's emotional and mental life in order and thus seeing the best way to move forward when the moon leaves the dark phase of the cycle. Of course, the cycles of the planets overlap and intertwine and the planetary influences during one dark lunar phase will probably not be the same as the next or the previous such phase, but the emotional and mental trends of the dark half of the moon will still be present. We are given a glimpse as to the best course of action during the dark half of the moon in the following quote, referring to a procedure in future esoteric schools, remembering that the year and the day have their ebb and flow corresponding to

the lunar cycle:

[The student] writes during the 'dark period' of the year the themes and essays, the books and pamphlets that will embody the product of the assimilated information. The best of these books will be published yearly by the college, for the use of the public. In this way one serves one's time and generation and educates the race in the higher knowledge. In exactly the same way one's studies each month will be so arranged that the harder part (dealing with the higher mind) will be undertaken during the part of the month which is called the bright half [or the full moon period], whilst the work of the dark half will be more given over to the things concerning lower mind and to an effort to hold the gain of the earlier weeks.[5]

In that last sentence we get a clear picture of the best use of the period of the dark half of the moon. This method is followed in Buddhist monasteries, with the day of the new moon being given over to renewal of one's vows and the taking of precepts. It is a day devoted to Shakyamuni and is known as such. As for precepts, it is a day when one abstains from any non-virtuous action, and it is seen as a special purification practice. Such a practice is seen as "the Buddha's skillful method for purifying our negative karma." [6] The full moon, on the other hand, is known as Amitabha Day and is given over to Medicine Buddha (healing, shown left [7]) practice. Amitabha is the buddha of infinite light and life. Of special interest to astrologers and Theosophically-based students, the full moon day is also a special day for the practice of the Kalachakra Tantra. But why would the new moon in particular be associated with practices of purification? This relates to one of the more esoteric aspects of the moon, in particular with the lunar pitris, or ancestors. In Hinduism, the day of the new moon is called Amavasya. It is set aside for the worship of forefathers, or ancestors in other words. In modern practice it is a day that is set aside to honor one's relatives who have passed on, especially one's parents, grandparents great-grandparents, etc. The word for 'forefather' in Sanskrit is pitra, which in the Secret Doctrine [8] is associated with the lunar lords, or pitris—the progenitors of the human race, to keep things simple. We have the following passage:

The word Pitri does mean, no doubt, the ancestor; but that which is invoked is the lunar wisdom esoterically and not the "Lunar ancestor." It is this Wisdom that was invoked by Qu-ta-my, the Chaldean, in the Nabathean Agriculture, who wrote down "the revelations of the Moon." But there is the other side to this. If most of the Brahmanical religious ceremonials are connected with the full moon so do the dark ceremonials of the sorcerers take place at the new moon and its last quarter. For similarly when the lost human being, or sorcerer, attains the consummation of his depraved career, all the evil Karma, and the evil inspiration, comes down upon him as a dark incubus of iniquity from "the dark side of the moon," which is a terra

incognita to Science, but a well explored land to the Adept. The Sorcerer, the Dugpa, who always performs his hellish rites on the day of the new moon, when the benignant [benevolent] influence of the Pitris is at its lowest ebb, crystallizes some of the Satanic energy of his predecessors in evil, and turns it to his own vile ends; while the Brahman, on the other hand, pursues a corresponding benevolent course with the energy bequeathed him by his Pitris...Therefore, this is the true Spiritualism of which the heart and soul have been entirely missed by the modern Spiritualists. When the day of the full revelation comes, it will be seen that the so-called "superstitions" of Brahmanism and the ancient Pagans in general were merely natural and psychical sciences, veiled from the profane eyes of the ignorant multitudes, for fear of desecration and abuse, by allegorical and symbolical disguises that modern science has failed to discover.[9]

Thus, we see how the lunar cycle works out, or any other planetary cycle for that matter, and the best types of activities in which to engage during the various parts of those cycles. During the dark part of the cycle the focus is upon putting ideas into tangible forms. For esoteric work, that means putting pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, if you will—putting one's mind in order and passing on one's insights to others. In other words, in whatever walk of life one has chosen, the time of the full moon is the period wherein subjective contacts are most easily made, ideas are most easily accessed and intuition more naturally flows, whereas the period of the new moon is the time best spent in outer activity, namely for making the insights garnered at the full moon accessible for others and concrete in some manner through outer activity. The following quote goes on to flesh out these points:

Each day will be likewise divided into set times, the earlier hours being those in which the more abstract and occult data will be given, the latter part of the day being given over to a more practical type of work...The basis of all occult growth is meditation, or those periods of silent gestation in which the soul grows in the silence. Therefore, during the day there will be...three periods of meditation—at sunrise, at midday, and at sunset...[10]

In addition:

An appreciation of the above thoughts should build in the aspirant a realisation of the value of one's meditation work, whilst the idea of a cyclic response to soul impulse lies back of the activities of a morning meditation, a noonday recollection, and an evening review. A larger ebb and flow is also indicated in the two aspects of the full moon and the new moon. Let this be borne in mind.[11]

And to finally close out this line of thought, or perhaps to open further avenues from the same:

There are crisis points at times of superlative tension in the meditative work of all...ashrams. At the times of the new moon and of the full moon, all members of all the ashrams meditate deeply in an invocative and evocative manner; their

meditation, therefore, falls into two parts: the first part is evocative of inspiration from the nirmanakayas[12] with whom they deliberately get in touch; the second part is invocative of the New Group of World Servers and enables them responsively to come under hierarchical impression...[13]

The full moon involves the contact with the nirmanakayas, which is inward and subjective, whereas with the new moon we see the action of precipitation in some way—an outer manifestation or effort, and it is the latter in which the New Group of World Servers has a particular role to play. However, this outward focus still entails maintaining one's inner contact with the higher Self and thus with one's subjective group. One of the primary roles of this New Group is to offset whatever darkness they encounter in the thoughts of humanity and bring light into human affairs. We can perhaps see from the discussion thus far that this group has a distinct role to play in the precipitation of divine purpose and universal love in the 'real world' of everyday physical existence, and the days of the new moon have a particular relation to this group.

A final point to be made in relation to the dark half of the moon is that the 29th day of the lunar month in Vajrayana Buddhism (tantric Buddhism) in particular is dedicated to the dharmapalas—the wrathful protectors of the dharma, or divine law. The most common of these protectors is Mahakala, however there are more than a dozen main ones, such as Palden Lhamo (shown right[14]), and each of the Tantras has their own special protectors. The main bastion of Vajrayana Buddhism in the past was Tibet, although Tibetan Buddhists have spread about the world now. Tibet before the introduction of Buddhism was full of sorcerers, and it would come as no surprise that 'Tibetan Buddhism' would have such a day dedicated to protector practices, given the preceding quote. We in the West would likely dismiss

such a day as non-essential or as simple superstition, but given that we have largely lost touch with the cycles of the moon and its not-so-subtle influence at times, I maintain that it would be of benefit to examine the days of the dark half of the moon more fully.

In effect, the protector practices begin with the 25th day of the lunar cycle in Vajrayana practice, as it is a day that is given over to dominating and destructive acts.[15] The 25th day is devoted to the mother tantras[16]—what we might call the 'Fierce Ladies' in Vajrayana, although 'fierce lady' on the whole refers to kundalini, or gtum mo(Tibetan). All such tantras are wrathful practices, and as such they represent an expression of skillful means. Mother tantras represent the wisdom aspect of the path, whereas the father tantras represent the method aspect. In Eastern occultism, the father tantras are the yang aspect, and the mother tantras are the yin aspect. The mother tantras thus cultivate and

safeguard the essence of the path to enlightenment. What is alluded to here is that from the 25th day of the lunar cycle one should aim to safeguard the essence of what has been learned or accessed in the earlier periods of the lunar cycle. Conversely, the aim in the waxing half of the lunar cycle is devoted to the methods of spiritual attainment and the safeguarding of those methods, which leads to revelation at the full moon if we are successful at our efforts.

How do we safeguard, in the latter quarter of the lunar cycle, the essence of what we have accessed or attained in the earlier phases of the lunar cycle? We could actually engage in one or more of the mother tantras, or we can take other approaches, and these are very effective. If we are not inclined to Buddhist or Hindu tantric practices, another method is to record our insights so they are not forgotten or corrupted as we go about our outer lives, as alluded to in one of the preceding quotes. Another method is to recount the workings of our mind throughout the cycle, whether that cycle be a day, a month or a year, and therein to ensure that we keep our mind focused upon the long-term goal and the tasks at hand instead of getting lost in or distracted by intrusive emotions and extraneous thoughts that really have no bearing on the essential purpose of our lives. What does it matter if we feel depressed, for instance? Do we let that shut us down, or do we move through it? What is the source of the depression? Is it from within us or elsewhere? What is the anger that underlies that depression—the anger that we are suppressing? What is it that intrudes upon our happiness? As we peel away the layers of those thoughts and emotions we eventually see that they have no basis in fact—that they are empty of any inherent existence in and of themselves. In this way we access and draw upon the ‘Fierce Ladies’, without even realizing it. The essence of the Mother is insuperable bliss and all of the mother tantras are involved in the direct realization of this supreme bliss—the Bliss that realizes Emptiness, or Clear Light.

Whatever path we have embraced in this life, whether it is religious, pagan, atheistic, Buddhist or what have you, the cycle of the moon affects us, physically and subjectively. We might dismiss its effects in our lives and go about our business, but to do so only introduces stresses that we are better off without. Dismissing the cycles of life are like trying to go without sleep—we can do so for a time, and wreck our health in the process, but eventually we succumb. On the other hand, if we see the opportunity represented in these cycles, then we can enter into cooperative grace with our inner nature and the greater collective rhythms of which we are a part. The dark half of the moon represents such an opportunity. And in rediscovering our own natural rhythms within these cycles, we release creative potentials that we probably had not realized were there. The dark half of the moon is a time of reflection and of putting things in order—the main thing being our own mind. Instead of its approach being seen in a negative light, may we instead come to see it simply as another interval on the path to greater

realization